Organizational Structure Discussion
The Library Council members met between meetings to prepare a report on the latest version of the organizational chart, which is attached to the end of these minutes.

The dean’s response to the idea of branch librarians reporting directly to the library director of academic and research services contains several points. The first is that there are several activities that could be occurring between the branches that are not now occurring, which the branch coordinator might facilitate, such as cross training, programs with departments and faculty, posters sessions, lectures, events to highlight collections, etc. The role of the branch coordinator is meant to relieve some of the day-to-day issues that can be handled without the director’s approval, but would not preclude or prohibit any librarian from having meaningful conversations with a director on issues of concern. Without the coordinator role, we are left with the same cumbersome, difficult struggle we have now of getting things done.

Comment: The open forum discussion described as the communications clearinghouse is meant to be carried forward in the coordinators, who would meet regularly to report and plan ongoing projects. The revised organizational chart is meant to be a functional chart, not a reporting or supervisory structure. The coordinators would not be ordering but advising.

Communication has to take place at different levels. We also need a succession plan and to train people to move up in the ranks. The coordinator role could be a rotating two- or three-year assignment, which would give individuals experience in leadership roles and allow them to develop skills needed for more responsibilities. The coordinators are meant to foster more cross-communication among groups that have similar activities. Right now we have pockets that work independently of one another, but not always to the best effect. We must gain the tools and knowledge to interact more within departments and programs outside of the Libraries. This can be facilitated by conversations with others who have skills and experience and similar goals.

A common refrain in all of these meetings is a breakdown in communication. Everyone in the library is working toward the same goals. Our main focus is to support the academic mission of the university. Instruction, collections development, and circulation all support the university mission. We are not enemies but colleagues, and should work together as such without negativity or personal contention. We individualize and personalize issues, but nothing in this organization is personal. It is just work. Negativity bogs us down. Reducing negativity will take us forward by eliminating barriers. The service components and needs of our constituents are the same regardless of the organizational structure. Not all individuals have the same comprehension levels—some need to hear the same information several times before the impact it may have their area of responsibility is fully realized. Having the coordinators may help in this process.
Expectations that are not followed up on is a job performance issue and should be treated as such. The administrators’ role is to get you the tools you need to do the job effectively and to assist in getting people to work together to achieve goals.

Comment: Branch libraries’ ties to reference and access services are more critical than ties to other branches; a focus on coordination between the branches will let the more critical relationship slide. Answer: Only if you allow it to slide. All the same work and responsibilities will continue, so the same ties must be maintained with the other departments. It is not either / or.

Comment: The intention of the communications clearinghouse was an ad hoc group of project leaders who would report on current issues. Answer: That transitioned into the coordinators to formalize how we operate. Without assigned responsibilities, the effort will not be successful.

Comment: If someone with authority is not in charge, a project will not get completed. Another level of bureaucracy will prohibit communication, not facilitate it. The more people who have to approve a project, the less likely it will get done. Answer: The authority to complete projects is pushed down to the working levels, so more people will not have to approve.

Comment: Collection development is a huge part of the operation and as such should not be combined with reference and instruction and all of the other duties of the director for academic and research services. Answer: The current system of separating collection development from other duties performed by librarians is disliked. Selectors’ duties are also closely related to reference, instruction, etc. Because of the concerns raised, the selectors were assigned to academic services.

Comment: We’ve talked a lot about the branches, but what about the other issues raised by the committee? Answer: The dean has spoken with Tim Nutt, interim head of Special Collections, and both agree that currently, and particularly in light of the upcoming capital campaign, a direct report to the dean is agreeable. The technical side of Physical Collections will remain with the director for Collections Support, while the rest will report to the director for Academic Services.

The Admin Group will meet and present a finalized organizational chart on Friday, June 8. We will try that out for a while. If it does not work, we will change it. We will try something different to try to increase communication. If that doesn’t work, we’ll move on.

**Library Council Non-Administrative Members’ Report on Organizational Structure**

**May, 2012**

There is a firm consensus that the branches should report directly to the director of academic and research services (ARS); no non-administrative member of the Libraries’ Council is in favor of the branch coordinator position. Some of the reasons stated include:

- Meaningful supervision requires strong working knowledge of the areas for which one is responsible. No branch head could adequately serve as the head of a branch library, which includes numerous duties along a broad spectrum, and supervise effectively the other branches. The coordinator position presumes that branches require better coordination; we argue that the branches already work together well. Where the organization could improve is strengthening
the key ties between the individual branches and Research Services (Reference) and Physical Collections and Access (Circulation).

- Informal coordination among the branches of day-to-day matters could occur, but the ARS director should provide division-wide leadership, which includes the formal, direct coordination and supervision of the significant aspects of the division’s operations.
- The proposed position creates an unnecessary layer and inefficiency; it does not address the distinction between supervision and coordination.
- Every department within ARS should have direct access to the ARS director, who should communicate directly a vision for the division and ensure optimal research and public service.
- Coordination of important functions (e.g., instruction) does not succeed in the Libraries when it is informal and too low on the organizational chart.
- The benefits of maintaining direct reports outweigh the concerns regarding the apparent imbalance of the number of direct reports in this division (compared to the Collections Support Division). Many academic administrators on campus (the provost, deans, and chairs) have more than four or five direct reports.

Most Council members believe strongly that Special Collections should report directly to the dean. Interaction between Special Collections and donors occurs on a daily basis, and the department communicates regularly with other high-profile offices. Unfiltered reporting between Special Collections and both the Dean’s Office and Library Development is essential to the efficient management of relations with donors and other stakeholders. The dean already works closely with the head of Special Collections not only with donors, but also in fundraising, programming, and high-profile acquisitions. To facilitate communication between the dean and Special Collections—which will only increase as the Libraries advances on the national stage—we recommended that Special Collections be placed immediately below the dean.

There is also a consensus that Physical Collections and Access (PCA) should remain in ARS. The Libraries invested considerably in creating a joint service desk. The supervision of this area should remain in one division. PCA will continue to provide public, including research services, and it will be the sole provider of these services when staff from Research Services are absent. PCA will also be the most publicly visible department within the Libraries for some time, directs the circulation module of Millennium, and supports emerging initiatives in distant education and course management software. Because consistency and excellence of front-line service will be a core function of the ARS director, s/he should supervise PCA. Should the number of direct reports and “imbalance” of the divisions remain a concern, there are options (including a combination of the two below):

- Stacks could be split off from PCA, for which there is precedent, and report to the Collections Support director. Judy Ganson currently oversees some of the stacks manager’s work.
- Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery ILL/DD could be moved to Collections Support. Clearly ILL/DD performs research services, but it is less publicly prominent than PCA. There is also potential for synergy between Acquisitions and ILL/DD in securing materials for patrons and determining the optimal mix of ownership and access.

The chart does not address the responsibilities of the collections development coordinator, and there have been few discussions on this topic. The non-administrative councilors agree with the placement
but feel that the position may require a full-time commitment. If full-time, the position could possibly coordinate, or facilitate the coordination, of instruction.

The chart does not refer to Periodicals. The placement (or evolution) of this unit should be addressed. The box “Dean’s Office” on the chart suggests that there will be a chief of staff. The lines from the boxes below and the dean’s box should be direct.